



Mud World Cup



The Mud Football World Championship, first held in Finland in 1997, is wrapping up this week in Beijing. As in the real World Cup, 32 local teams are competing for the championship.

Beijing Today's Yao Weijie led the championship's only amateur team at this first championship in China. Though her team lost in the first round, the players said they found it an enjoyable activity that they hope will continue to develop in China.

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Photo by Duan Wei

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Robots renew kids' dreams

A robotics competition has given 200 poor children a dream that they can be engineers instead of migrant laborers like their parents.

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Practical Chinese lessons

After finding no help at Chinese-run Chinese schools, these French men decided to build their own.

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Heritage safest in the hands of the people

Tan Huaiyu's journey to 147 world cultural heritage sites has convinced him that the heritage is best protected when it is used.

New cups have Starbucks back in hot water

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US ambassador prepares for tough job ahead

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Miniatures capture spirit of Old HK

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Get immersed in historic Xicheng

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Schools for migrants' children closed

Beijing authorities closed 24 schools for the children of migrant workers only weeks before the new semester was to begin, renewing concerns about the capital's unequal access to education.

More than 14,000 children, most of whom were on the outlying areas of Haidian, Chaoyang and Daxing districts, were affected by the closures, Xian Lianping, deputy director of the Beijing Municipal Education Committee, said Tuesday.

The local newspaper *Beijing News* said the government was low-balling the figure, and that as many as 30,000 children will not be able to attend school in the coming weeks.

It reported Tuesday that 30 schools were closed, and that many were immediately demolished.

Education officials from the three districts told Xinhua that the schools were closed because they had not been granted approval by education authorities, and that they did not meet required standards for safety, athletic facilities and food.

Unlike government-funded schools, it is almost impossible for privately-run schools to meet those standards because their classrooms are old houses rented from local villages and they lack any financial backers.

"I have applied for school permits [repeatedly] since 2002, when my school opened, but the education authorities never gave approval even though I did a lot to improve the school's conditions," a principal surnamed Yang in Daxing District was quoted as saying by *Beijing News*.

News reports about the school shutdowns and photos of angry parents have given rise to widespread concern on the Internet.

In a photo filed by *Beijing News*, a protesting father laid on the ground outside a closed school in Haidian District on Monday shouting helplessly, "We too have made contributions to Beijing!"

"[The closures] expose the inequality in education. Why should those children of migrant workers be left with no school to attend? Why aren't they like the children of Beijing's residents?" one user on Sina Weibo tweeted.

"Please help them. Let the children go to school!" another tweeted.

The nation's hukou, or household registration, system, has long prevented migrant workers from receiving equal access to education, medical care and social insurance despite the government's repeated pledges to take measures and address this issue.

In Beijing, there are more than 400,000 children of migrant workers, more than 70 percent of which attend government-funded schools, said Luo Jie, deputy director of the Beijing Municipal Education Committee.

That left 100,000 children to study at 176 privately-run schools, of which 62 were approved by the education authorities, Luo said.

"The other 114 schools were not approved, and they enrolled more than 40,000 students," he said.

Some 20 are scheduled for approval, and 50 may be approved if they find financial support to expand their construction. However, 30 have no safety guarantees (and need to be closed), he said.

The committee ordered education authorities in all districts to ensure that every child has a school to attend before the unapproved schools are closed and classrooms are demolished, he said.

(Xinhua)



A small girl carries her blanket away from her school. The school is scheduled for demolition. CFP Photo

Gov branches unite to crack down on fetal sexing

By Wei Xi

Six government organizations, including the National Population and Family Planning Commission and the Ministry of Health, began a nationwide crackdown on Tuesday to stamp out fetal sexing and selective abortion.

The campaign, which will continue until March 2012, is intended to rectify the serious gender imbalance on the mainland.

China Daily reported that the male to female sex ratio has been growing since the early 1980s. It peaked in 2004.

Last year, 118.08 males were born for every 100 females, a far cry from the world average.

The trend is blamed on traditional beliefs that favor having a boy, said Li Bin, minister of the family planning commission.

After the nation's family planning policy took effect, many married couples began paying to have their babies sexed while in the fetal stage. Those who learned their child was a female often proceeded to schedule an abortion, said a staff member at forensic medical center surnamed Guo.

"One of my relatives aborted her first baby because it was female," Guo said. "Our center is frequented by pregnant women. Most of them come to ask for fetal sexing, but we reject their requests."

A retired doctor who did not want to give his name said the problem of selective abortion is most serious at unlicensed, small clinics.

"Couples who have some connection to the medical staff can get such tests done in big hospitals. Migrant workers use the small clinics, which earn most of their income from fetal sexing," he said.

He said B-scan ultrasounds, which are normally used for fetal sexing, are only 60 percent accurate due to the position of the fetus in the womb.

During the campaign, all medical institutions and doctors found to be violating the ban on fetal sexing will face severe punishment, ranging from a loss of their medical license to criminal charges, said Liu Qian, vice minister of health.

Guo said the campaign is unlikely succeed, because the ban has already been violated for so many years. He said the only outcome of the crackdown, which is only enforcing currently lax laws and regulations, will be a stack of papers on some official's desk.

Change in marriage law could restore focus on love

By Han Manman

The Supreme Court recently released a new interpretation of the national law that governs marriage, clarifying how real estate disputes are to be settled in the country's increasing number of divorces.

Previously, real estate was regarded as shared property even if it was a gift from the parents of one spouse.

Under the new law, homes brought into the marriage by one party remain the personal property of the partner even after marriage. A home purchased in joint by both sides will be divided according to each side's contribution at the current value, it said.

"Parents who bought their children homes used to worry that their child's divorce could result in the loss of family property," said Sun Jungong, a court spokesperson.

Sun said division of property has been a major point of contest in divorce cases. With real estate costs escalating, both partners struggle to grab ownership of the property.

The new interpretation, intended to close legal loopholes, comes after three years of deliberation. Property bought for one spouse by his or her parents even after marriage will also continue to be the exclusive property of that spouse and not a common asset, the court said.

Many have applauded the interpretation as being in line with "China's real situation and social conventions."

China has a skyrocketing divorce rate. Over the past six years, divorce rates in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou have risen to 39, 38, and 35 percent, according to official statistics.

"The new interpretation will help to protect my son's personal

property," said Wang Xueru, a local resident, who is considering buying a house for her 28-year-old.

"The old rule was unfair to parents, many of whom worked hard their whole life to buy a place for their son as a marriage present. After divorce happened, the former daughter-in-law would walk away with half the property," Wang said.

Many young women are displeased with the new interpretation.

"A married woman always contributes much more than a man to the family. They go to work every day, just as their husbands do, but then they also have to take care of housework and the children," Wen Yi, a local culinary teacher, said, adding that it puts women at risk of gaining nothing in divorce.

Wu Di, a relationship therapist and popular blogger, said that although the new interpreta-

tion may put the rights of housewives at risk, it has the advantage of helping young people pay more attention to the true purpose of marriage.

"The strong desire for property has tainted the meaning of love. It's sad to see how many young Chinese people have had their values so clouded," she said.

The new law also encourages women to maintain their independence, even after marriage, and to think through the potential consequences of choosing to be a full-time housewife, Wu said.

"I think more women will now look for a man who is willing to work hard to succeed than look for a man who already owns a house," she said.

The judicial interpretation, which will go into effect on Saturday, is the third interpretation of the law following releases in 2001 and 2003.

Robotics contest reshapes poor children's dreams

By Han Manman

Migrant workers are the muscle of the city. They work hard and live poor in hopes that their children can have better employment opportunities than they did.

No matter how hard they work, few options ever open to their children. Most migrant boys and girls are left to follow in their parents' footsteps as the next generation of waiters, housekeepers and construction workers.

But one group of children may have the chance to pursue their dreams of becoming engineers, scientists and company leaders thanks to a new national robotics tournament that is trying to tap the brightest minds among the nation's migrants.



Many teams are designing robots that they hope can aid their parents.

Make robot for parents

At the call of "Come here!" Zhong Jun's dog bobs its head excitedly and looks in her direction.

Her dog's obedience is not the result of rigorous training; it's the result of science.

Zhong is a student at a primary school for the children of migrant workers in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, and the robot dog is one of her team's entries in a new national robotics tournament open exclusively to the children of migrants.

Working under a theme of wildlife conservation, her team also created a robotic snake capable of lunging in the direction of any movement. Both robots use ultrasonic sensors to detect motion or sound and respond accordingly.

Not far from Zhong's exhibition area is a team from a vocational middle school in Chengdu where 16-year-old student Zhu Suling shows off her work.

Two winning teams, one from the elementary school level and one from the middle school, will go on to compete in a world tournament this December in Norway. Zhu hopes her team will be among them.

"We've never been abroad. We really hope to see the outside world and to exchange ideas with foreign students," she says.

Zhu is from a village near Chengdu. To make a living, her parents and most of her relatives work in the big city as migrant laborers. The robotics course she took one year ago was her first time getting to use a computer.

For the competition, Zhu's team created a small robot capable of working as a digger.

"Most of my team members' parents are construction workers. To support the family, they have to do the hardest, dirtiest and most dangerous work that no city person is willing to do," Zhu says. The team hopes that one day a similar design can replace the need for human labor on the work site.

"Then my parents wouldn't have to toil in construction," she says.

While her team failed to win any of the practice races, she says she was still excited.

"I learned a lot from other teams' designs. Participating in this competition helped me learn that I'm really interested in programming. Maybe I can become an IT engineer one day," Zhu says. She dreams of being a female Bill Gates.



The robotics tournament gives the children of migrants a hope that their futures have many possibilities.

CFP Photos

Migrant children tournament

Zhong and Zhu's teams were among 40 selected from migrant schools across the country to compete in the Chengdu tournament.

With the support of the China Youth Development Foundation (CYDF) and Dell, student teams created robots designed to complete missions based on real-world problems. Their robots had to climb steep ramps, rescue victims and deliver medical supplies to a burning and unstable building.

Contestants were judged on presentation, robot performance, technical design and programming and teamwork.

"All of the children are from families of migrants. They live poor and have little access to education and no chance to master computer skills," says Yang Xiaoyu, secretary general of CYDF.

"This competition gives them a chance to apply math and science concepts to real-world prob-

lems," Yang says. The goal, of course, is to get the students excited about creative engineering and to build their confidence.

Zhang Lizheng, general referee of the tournament, says he is surprised to see so many creative ideas from those children.

While most of the participants had only six months to learn about robotics, the teams showed an excellent approach to design and logic programming, he said.

Students from the Zhengzhou BN Vocational School designed an induction drawbridge to solve the problem of ships getting stuck. When a ship too tall to pass under the bridge neared, the drawbridge automatically opened to let it pass.

A Beijing team designed a robot that could use some of its own kinetic energy to power its movement for basic tasks, such as housework.

"Their ideas are very enlightening," Zhang says. "This competi-

tion gives them a venue to show off their talent."

Daring to change destiny

Yang says that when he asked the urban students about their dreams, many said they wanted to be pilots, businesspeople or scientists.

But "dreams" have a different meaning for migrants: they are usually impossible to make come true.

CYDF surveyed migrant children about their dreams and found that most hoped to become police officers or chengguan, urban managers who have an infamous reputation for hassling migrants.

"The children know these are the people who control their parents. They have seen how the chengguan treat their parents and hope that if they can become chengguan, no one will dare to bully them again," he says.

"But if these children are hoping to become policemen to get revenge on the system, they can hardly be expected to be good members of the force."

Yang says he found most children changed their dreams after learning about computers and participating in the robotics competition.

"The technology seems to open a door for them. It gives them a feeling that they have many possibilities for their future," Yang says.

But the 200 children who participated in the tournament represent less than a fraction of a percent of the nation's 20 million young migrants.

Using information technology to help migrant children adapt and find better work in society will be a tough task for CYDF.

A good way is to cooperate with big companies to teach computer use and science, Yang said, pointing to India as an example. Many Indian villages have community computer centers created by Microsoft where students can receive free training.

He says CYDF is doing similar things now with the cooperation of Dell China, and that 33 schools for migrant children have computer centers.

"That's where the tournament comes in. Kids think robots are cool. It's easier to engage them when they can actually see their work in action. It's applied learning at its best, and helps children learn about technology and innovation," he says.

More than 3,000 students have benefitted from the project so far.

"Providing these children with computer courses is only the first step. We want to get more companies involved to help migrant and village children change their destinies and realize their dreams," Yang says.

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Saving the world, twice?

Majority of Chinese believe the country should help itself first

With the US' recent credit troubles and the threat of another global financial meltdown on the horizon, all eyes are again on China. The question, again: despite problems of its own, will the world's second largest economy rise up to save the developed world?



Many believe China needs to save itself before it can save the world.

Mai Tian/CFP Photo

Since the 2008 financial crisis, world business and political leaders have made efforts to get cash-rich China to consume more and drive global economic growth.

Last Friday, credit rating agency Standard & Poor's announcement to downgrade the US credit rating from AAA to AA+

only intensified the tendency, and the pressure for China to save the world is certain to continue throughout the year.

But it seems paradoxical for a country where there are still hundreds of millions of poor to rescue the West. China has the wealth to do so, but it prefers to

focus on its own problems, said London-based *The Telegraph*.

Besides, the country is experiencing a transition from an economy that depends on exports and on investment in infrastructure to one where consumers play a much greater role.

(By Huang Daohen)

What ordinary people say

China alone won't help

By Huang Daohen

Imagine: China, a knight in shining armor, comes galloping in on its white horse to save the world economy.

Only in movies.

A poll by *Beijing Today* found that more than 90 percent of respondents – ordinary people and business professors in Beijing – think China should not try to "save the world."

Who will save China then? many said.

To Erin Chou, analyst with a local securities agency, China has its own debt trouble despite its \$3 trillion (19 trillion yuan) in reserve.

On the same day last month when the country planned to help eurozone economies, a report released by the National Audit Office showed that local governments had run up 10.72 trillion yuan in debt.

But Chou said the real figure is actually higher. An earlier estimate by the central bank showed the debt could be as large as 14.4 trillion yuan, while independent analysts point out the real number is closer to 20 trillion yuan.

These signs show that pro-

vincial governments are facing severe financial crises and are at risk of defaulting on their debt, Chou said.

Hu Xin, senior researcher at Accenture, is more concerned about the country's current fight with rampant inflation.

China has its own problems to deal with, Hu said. "Rising wages, food supply pressure and falling emerging exports could crush an economy trying to transition."

Ordinary people agreed. "I don't believe China alone can do much to aid the richer world," said a local resident surnamed Wang.

"If you have been to the remote villages in the western China, you would know that there are still people who can barely feed themselves, to say nothing of getting better education and decent medical care," he said.

Even if the country has the means to help, it is more important to address these problems, Wang said.

Others say that the country has the responsibility to do more with such a large population and rising wealth, but like Wang, they believe China may need to save itself before it can save the world.

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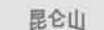
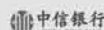
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Starbucks in trouble again

By Huang Daohen

Starbucks has stirred up jingoist sensibilities once more as it tries to blend in to local markets.

This time, the American coffee chain drew protest when it used an image of Bao Zheng (also known as Bao Gong), an ancient judge, on its souvenir coffee mugs for the opening of the chain's first branch in Hefei, Anhui Province: Bao's hometown.

In a statement, Starbucks said the launch of the Bao mug is part of its latest marketing effort in Hefei and also meant to pay homage to the renowned judge.

The company usually customizes cups or bottles for each city it's in. For instance, in Beijing, it sells cups featuring the Great Wall.

But a 36th-generation descendant of Bao, Bao Xunan, was not impressed. After seeing his dark-faced ancestor on the mug, he said the image was absurd.

"It looks like a laowai (foreigner), and that is a joke," Bao told local media. "Bao Zheng would surely feel angry if he knew that his face was on mugs being sold for profit."

The 90-yuan mug is apparently popular in the city. But Bao said it cost only 10 yuan, at most, to make, calling the difference an "ill-gotten" profit.

Bao, who has registered his ancestor as a trademark, said Starbucks has violated "intellectual property rights" and wanted the company to stop its sales.

Some netizens agreed, saying the use of an image of a historical figure for profit is inappropriate.

Starbucks did not give a response to the complaints. A spokesperson told Xinhua that the company will closely watch the situation.

This is not the first time Starbucks has come under fire. In 2007, it was pressured into closing its controversial booth in the Forbidden City.

But the company continues to expand in the world's most potent market, with plans to open 1,500 new cafes by 2015.



The Bao Gong mug offered by Starbucks irritated one of the famous judge's descendants, who accused the company of infringing his ancestor's image rights. IC Photo

Comment

No sympathy for Starbucks

I don't have much sympathy for Starbucks this time. In a dispute several years ago, the coffee chain giant sued and almost destroyed a small roaster in New Hampshire, where I'm from. The store made a joke coffee called Charbux, but Starbucks pulled the poor guy into a federal court. Now it's your turn to face the music.

— Felix Bates, IT engineer

Culture vs. commercialization

There are common fears that everything in China will be taken over by foreign culture. That is why the Bao Gong mug caused such a fuss and why many are saying Starbucks should stop cashing in on the country's most famous upright official. But while culture may matter in this case, I think the controversy is more about commercialization and making money.

— Robert Chen,

editor at Xinhua News Agency

Bao doesn't understand intellectual property rights

This is a bit strange to me as it relates to intellectual property. You cannot trademark the likeness of a historical figure. Nor can you copyright it, as it is not a spe-

cific work, such as a painting or sculpture. And even if you can, copyright laws have expiration dates. Also, I don't think a 36th-generation descendant can prove that he's the legal inheritor.

Moreover, if the descendant wants to take Starbucks to court, he should be required to produce a photo of Bao Zheng's true likeness. But how can he? Drop it and move on.

— Hannah, student from Germany

Should've consulted locals

Starbucks' move is actually a pretty good way of localization: Bao was born in Hefei and is a popular historical figure to locals. There is never a bad time for anyone to launch a marketing campaign for the local market. But companies should prepare for local protestations before they carry out a plan.

— Tony Cheung, market analyst

Memorial of Martin Luther King with a Chinese label?

By Wei Xi

The dedication of a memorial for Martin Luther King Jr. will be held at the National Mall in Washington DC on August 28.

But some are raising concerns about the memorial being "made in China."

The president of the project foundation, Harry E. Johnson Sr., said the leading sculptor, Lei Yixin, from Changsha, Hunan Province, worked closely with black painter Jon Onye Lockard and sculptor Ed Hamilton.

But Atlanta resident Lea Winfrey Young told *The Washington Post* that she and her husband were leading a group of critics who believe that such an important project should be done solely by black Americans — or Americans, at least.

"Dr. King's statue is to be shipped here in a crate that supposedly says 'Made in China.' That's just obscene," she said.

Critics from the Huffington Post said that the stylization of King's sculpture, in particular the depiction of the folds and tails of King's jacket, is largely in the vocabulary of Maoist China, and that the light color of the granite used for King's sculpture contrasts too harshly with the darker green granite used on the inscription wall.

Confronted with various critics, Lei is still confident in his work. What King



Artist Lei Yixin and his MLK Jr. sculpture
Ye Tian/IC Photo

fought for is also valued in China, Lei told *China News*. He said though King's statue is "made in China," it would look the best in the US.

Comment

King is a leader of all human beings

Racial discrimination occurs in every country and is opposed around the world. We Chinese also stand for racial equality and freedom. King is not only a leader of African Americans and Americans, but also a leader among Chinese people and all human beings. Therefore, I don't think a non-American artist is less able to make a statue of King.

— Cao Mingqing, office worker

Statue by Chinese artist is an example of racial equality

I personally believe that art is universal and that it transcends all national and cultural borders and boundaries. An artist of any kind should not be restricted nor limited to subject matters pertaining to his country, his history, his culture or his religion. Moreover, the values upheld by Martin Luther King Jr. are universal human values, such as civil rights, racial equality, an end to discrimination, non-violence, etc. Today, these values are held in great esteem worldwide.

The belief that a Chinese artist is incapable of capturing Dr. King's personality in his memorial sculpture may be somewhat discriminatory, and would also go against the same values preached by Dr. King. In my opinion, the fact that a Chinese artist was selected for such a feat is the perfect example of racial equality and globalization.

Besides, the assumption that an artist

would naturally have a poorer understanding of any foreign subject matter is, in my opinion, outdated, especially in our global age where advanced telecommunication tools have eroded geographical distances and hence brought people of all countries closer to each other. Many Chinese artists have excelled in traditional Western art forms such as ballet, symphony orchestra, oil paintings, etc., and vice versa.

— Sum Pek Kee, Singaporean regional communications manager

Arts should not be attached with politics

Art has no boundaries and the political ideology of China should not be tied with Lei's personal artistic level. In China, there are also a great number of people who worship freedom and democracy, among them elites from all parts of society. If we want to judge Lei, we should do it purely from an artistic angle.

— Yang Yang, graduate student at Peking University

Art with no board

I think the controversy occurred because King was a political figure and representative of civil rights activists. Therefore, some people might naturally think his statue should be sculpted by Americans. But in the artists' eyes, the statue, as a work of art, should not be restricted to a single country.

— Shi Yingchang, researcher

French expats' Chinese language school thrives

In 2008, under a bilateral cultural exchange program held by the foreign ministries of France and China, French companies were hiring young graduates under the age of 29 and sending them abroad to gain experience in the international market.

That's how Pouliquen and Tournier found themselves in China.

Pouliquen, then 24, worked in renewable energy. Tournier, 26, was in the pharmaceutical industry. He quickly realized how vital language was after attending several conferences and visiting scores of hospitals.

One year later, through a chance meeting, the two developed a friendship and started the TailorMade Chinese Center.

At first, no one believed they would be successful. After all, many more people wanted to learn English than Chinese. But after only a year and a half, their center is ranked among the top five on several websites and forums.

Although neither of them come from a professional educational background, the two felt their Chinese-learning experiences provided them with unique assets.

"We decided to go into the Chinese education market even though there are a lot of conventional local competitors because we had experience as students of Chinese," Pouliquen said.

"We tried some private schools and private tutors, and through those experiences we could see that there were lot of things that we could improve on without too much difficulty," he said.

Located in the middle of the central business district, the center has free Wi-Fi, flat-screen TVs and a sofa. The lobby is the center of the school, with classrooms all around it.

"After experiencing all of those difficulties and obstacles on the road of Chinese learning, Tournier and I have a clearer understanding of what kind of Chinese language center foreigners need, and the exact style of teaching they want," Pouliquen said.

He said conventional Chinese language school founders often don't understand course settings, teaching methods, class atmosphere and after-class communication.

"There are several reasons, but the main one is probably linked to the cultural gap between Chinese and people from the other half of the globe," Pouliquen said. "The cultural gap is big and expectations may be very different, which can lead to misunderstanding and frustration."

Pouliquen recalled a bitter experience while studying Chinese in China. When he first arrived, he found he had to learn Chinese as fast as possible, so he went to three different schools and had a free trial in each one. At the third school, the teacher was very professional and seemed to clearly understand his needs, so he chose the school and bought 100 hours.

"But the following week, for my first lesson, the teacher started me at too high a level without giving me basics," he said. "Most Chinese believe that the more difficult and sophisticated their course content is, the more qualified and professional they themselves might look. But for us, the more practical the better."

Besides cultural gaps, quality of service provided to foreign students is also important. First, foreigners need well-trained and professional teachers with a real diploma focusing on teaching Chinese, not just someone "good at English and at ease with students."

"Otherwise, no one needs to go to school. A Chinese roommate would suffice," Pouliquen said.

By Chu Meng

For those new to China, language is often the biggest barrier to getting around and the toughest adjustment. It can be particularly frustrating for those who have no prior experience – life can seem like walking blindfolded through busy intersections.

Hundreds of Chinese language schools offer a variety of courses, but none is quite like the school run by Frenchmen Jean Francois Pouliquen and Romain Tournier.



Tailor-made private courses are given by graduates of Beijing Language and Culture University who majored in teaching Chinese as a second language.



More than 200 foreign students are currently taking classes from the center.



TailorMade Chinese Center founders, Frenchmen Jean Francois Pouliquen and Romain Tournier

Photos provided by TailorMade Chinese Center

All of TailorMade Chinese Center's teachers are accredited graduates from Beijing Language and Culture University who majored in teaching Chinese as a second language. They all have strong basics and know what to teach.

At the center, they are all provided an intense training program focusing on key aspects of training and how to use foreign-friendly teaching methods and course materials.

Pouliquen and Tournier are also very selective. They may only hire one candidate out of six or seven on average.

"Not because they are bad, but because we try to choose those with a personality and behavior most likely to match with international culture and standards," Pouliquen said.

Foreigners in Beijing also need more of a tailor-made curriculum that's specific to their daily lives or job requirements.

At the school, students can either follow a core course, which consists of five levels of Mandarin lessons ranging from beginner to expert, or they can select Chinese business or Chinese office courses.

Classes are available at a variety of times, from as early as 7 am to as late as 10 pm.

"You can choose to learn Chinese on site, over the Internet or at a location of your choice," Pouliquen said. "You go at your own pace. You're free to adapt the content of your lessons to suit your own needs and address the situations you face in daily life."

"I think the main point is that we place students' satisfaction as the first priority, and our mission is to make sure they reach their goals, which may differ from one student to another," said Tournier, who acts as the center's marketing director. "This means we have to first clearly identify their situation, expectations and needs in order to be able to efficiently respond to them."

Tournier said their students are mostly foreign professionals or managers working for major international companies. Efficient cross-cultural management is key to success. They need to talk and understand Chinese to be more capable in their daily work, and they know they cannot afford to lose time.

"That is why they need a tailor-made program," Tournier said. "And that is the main point distinguishing TailorMade Chinese Center from conventional language schools in China."

The founders believe that is important for expats in a busy metropolitan city like Beijing.

"If a person comes to China and everyone in your company speaks Chinese, there is not much benefit spending 70 percent of class time learning Chinese characters," Tournier said. "We focus on what the clients want, but what we suggest is to learn oral Chinese at the beginning."

During the past three months, the school has registered 55 new students, half of whom were referred by old students.

Now they have about 200 students. And by the end of this year, another branch will be opened in Shanghai.

"We just finished some in-depth marketing research and found that the needs of expats in Beijing and Shanghai are very alike," Pouliquen said. "In the future, we are thinking of developing a business network across cities in China."

Ambassador Locke makes positive first impression

By Han Manman

Gary Locke's first test as the new US ambassador to China was to welcome US Vice President Joe Biden, who landed in Beijing on Wednesday for his first high-profile week-long visit to China. Many were curious if this first Chinese American ambassador could help Biden improve Sino-US relations.

Locke met with media in his new Beijing residence for his official debut last Sunday, two days after he and his family arrived in town. But the ambassador is making headlines – and winning praise – for something else altogether: a photo.

Specifically, a photo taken by a Chinese blogger that showed Locke at a Starbucks with his family, sans security, and carrying his own luggage and traveling from the airport in a modest car.

The photo has been reposted and tweeted more than 40,000 times.

Some people think Locke's low-key arrival reflects his simple working style, and even suggested Chinese officials who always travel with entourages and bodyguards learn from his style.

"The new ambassador might want to make the occasion easier by dressing casually and introduc-



Gary Locke makes his official debut with his family last Sunday in his new Beijing residence. Photo by Zuma Cui

ing his family to all. But his mission to China won't be as easy," said Zhang Wenzong, an American researcher from the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations.

There are a number of problems that Locke will have to deal with, including strains over trade, military relations and the US debt. Locke's mission will be much

heavier than the bag he carried out China, Zhang said.

Zhang said a real test for Locke comes next year, when the US will hold its general elections. Criticism of the US' current China policy may be intensified. Handling this will be Locke's test of wisdom as the top US diplomat in China.

"Controlling a potential crisis,

building consensus and promoting active cooperation between the two nations will allow Locke to take Sino-US relations to new historic heights," he said.

As a child of Chinese immigrants to the US, Locke is the first Chinese American ambassador to represent the US in the land of his ancestors.

"I think being a Chinese



The photo of Gary Locke carrying his own backpack and ordering coffee in a Seattle airport draw lots of praise from Chinese commentators. AP Photo

American, I have a greater sensitivity and understanding of the history and culture of China," Locke, surrounded by his wife and three children, told the press gathered in the courtyard in front of his new residence last Sunday. "But I am here as a representative of the American government, and the American government wants closer, more collaborative and cooperative relations with the people and government of China," he said.

According to the US Embassy press office, Locke will be meeting with various Chinese government officials in the coming weeks, including President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao.

The 61-year-old Locke started his political career as Washington state governor and was US secretary of commerce before becoming the US ambassador to China. He was appointed by US president Barack Obama in March after the previous ambassador, Jon Huntsman, resigned to run for the presidency.

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Slogging it in the mud

By Yao Weijie

Mud soccer came to Beijing last Tuesday as 32 teams competed in the Mud Football World Championship.

The tournament, which started August 9 and will run until August 20, was organized jointly by the Beijing Olympic City Development Association, the United Kingdom Mud Football World Cup Organizing Committee and Beijing North Sports.

The winning team can participate in future European tournaments on behalf of China.

This peculiar sports event, which has been held once a year since 2000, originated in Finland before spreading to Sweden, Holland, Russia, England, Brazil and other countries. Now there are nearly 260 professional teams participating.

"It is a very interesting sport. I want more people to know about it," said Pan Hao, the 32-year-old executive director of North Sports, a tournament sponsor.

Sun Zhaopeng, 25, played for a team called the All-Star Team. All members of All-Star Team were self-organized amateurs, while other teams were organized by a unit or sponsored by companies.

"Our captain was pulling and kicking others the whole time," Sun said. "I think only in mud soccer could that happen."

He's right: the rules are lenient, making the activity more of a silly game than a real contest. Half of the players from All-Star Team had never played a regulation soccer game before.

Six people – of which at least one has to be a girl – are allowed on the "field" at one time – the field being mud. There are no off-sides. Players simply try to kick the ball past the goalkeeper and into a goal.

"It's amazing," said Hu Yao, a 26-year-old employee of Philips Group, a female player on



Thirty-two teams competed in Beijing's first Mud Football World Championship. Photos by Duan Wei



Players soaked in mud

All-Star Team who played the entire 24-minute game. "The mud splashed into my eyes, but I didn't have time to clean them. The venues are small, so the competition is intense. Next time I participate, I'll wear glasses."

Moxi Zishi, a 30-year-old singer, said, "Our shoes need to be tied with tape before the match. Since my shoes weren't tied well, they came off, and now my feet hurt."

Moxi grew up in the countryside in Yunnan Province, where she's played mud soccer before.

She said the match brought back memories of childhood.

"When people are going after the ball, they're caked in mud, and I can't tell my teammates from my opponent," Moxi said. "It was hilarious. Hu Yao [from the same team] even stole the ball from me."

"It was a good way to relax after work," said Zhang Liping, a 27-year-old accountant at Beijing Jia Run accounting firm. "The requirements to play real soccer are so high, and there's no such thing as co-ed soccer. But everyone can find their place in mud soccer."

Zhang said she thinks the sport could enhance the sense of teamwork.

"Although we lost 5-0 to the other team, I felt like we really worked together, and the camaraderie I felt was something I hadn't felt since high school," she said.

According to the competition

organizer, the mud was imported from different provinces. The sponsors then mixed it with other substances to achieve a certain texture.

"After that, we sterilized the mud. I think people won't find cleaner mud in the world than here," Pan said.

"More and more people are playing mud soccer, and its influence is expanding," Pan said. "I'm confident about its future in China."

Others thought the competition could have been better organized.

"Mud soccer is really geared toward office workers, but [the organizers] picked a time when most people are at work," said Zhangteng, who works at China International Capital Corporation. "Also, professional teams and amateur teams should be separated. It's unfair for them to have to play each other."

Peter Hook comes to spice up the city's electronic music scene

By Annie Wei

Compared to pop music, the electronic music market is small. The closure of venues such as White Rabbit, House and Lantern doesn't help the situation, either.

But Supercolab, a newly formed company that hosts events and concerts, decided to lighten up the city's electronic music scene by introducing known artists from around the world and pairing them with local talents to inspire music fans.

Before moving to China, David Vaughan, a 20-something partner at Supercolab, was a DJ and music public relations officer in London. For its next event, Vaughan said Supercolab would bring in Peter Hook in early September.

Hook was one of the godfathers and pioneers of electro

disco back in the 1980s, working with the bands Joy Division and New Order. His famous seminal tracks include "Blue Monday."

"Actually, more and more young people are beginning to like electronic music, and it's a good thing that [Supercolab] can bring in quality artists," said Howie Wang, a singer and guitarist for the local band Elenore.

Kuan Kuan, from the local band New Pants, said New Order was one of his favorite bands and he was looking forward to Hook's arrival so "we can see another cool side of Peter Hook's music, history and DJ skills."

But like most similar events, young expats are the target. Vaughan said attracting more young Chinese fans was a more long-term goal.



Peter Hook

Photos provided by Google.com

Where: 3rd floor of Tango, 79 Hepingli Xi Jie, Dongcheng district
When: September 3, 9 pm – late
Tel: 6428 2288
Cost: 80 yuan pre-sale and 120 yuan at the door

Event

Photography workshop at Culture Yard

Culture Yard will be hosting a full-day workshop led by award-winning photographer Peter Carney. Shooting and editing will be taught around Gulou's historic hutong. Advance registration is required.

Where: Culture Yard, 10 Shique Hutong, Yonghegong, Dongcheng District

When: August 20, 7:30-8:30 pm

Tel: 8404 4166

Cost: 500 yuan

Writers' community in Beijing

If you want to get constructive feedback on your writing and take it to the next level, our writers' community is the best place to go. Bring a couple copies of your work and share with group members, who will read and discuss over drinks. Don't just expect compliments for your work, however; our members give honest, hard-hitting opinions, which may be just what your piece needs.

Where: The Bookworm, Building 4, Sanlitun Nan Jie, Chaoyang District

When: Every Monday, 7:30 pm

Tel: 6586 9507

Cost: Free

Join the Beijing Devils rugby club

Want to see how tough you are? Come join the Beijing Devils' rugby practices every Tuesday night. We have a free bus that takes players to the field. All skill levels are welcomed. For more information, please visit beijingdevils.com.

Where: The Den, A4 Gongti Dong Lu, Dongcheng District (in front of City Hotel)

When: Every Tuesday, 7 pm

Email: beijingdevils@gmail.com

Cost: Free for first-timers

Knitting classes for all levels

Every Wednesday, Beyond Knitting offers classes for beginners and advanced knitters. You will learn techniques such as casting on, knit stitch, purl stitch and casting off, and also the history of knitting and grades of yarns.

Where: Changes, but mostly Sanlitun, Chaoyang Park, Lido area and central business district; contact the organizer for the location each week

When: Every Wednesday, 10 am – noon

Email: contact@beyondknitting.com

Cost: 200 yuan (including materials)

(By Wei Xi)

Are you satisfied with the quality of running water?

By Zhao Hongyi

A recent survey showed that more than 50 percent of people surveyed in Beijing are not satisfied with or worried about the quality of the city's running water. They believe the water is polluted, tastes strange and smells of chemicals. In other words, the water certainly is not drinkable without filtration.

The survey was conducted earlier this month by Friends of Nature, an independent non-government organization devoted to protecting the natural environment and raising living standards.

Drinking directly from a tap has long been a dream of local citizens. But two factors prevent this: one is the habit of boiling water first; the other is the water quality.

Beijing has two sources of natural water: one from the reservoirs mostly located in the western and northern uplands, the other from underground water reserves.

But due to climate change and drought, most of the rivers near Beijing are drying up, which in turn reduces the annual water supply to the reservoirs.

Concerning the underground water, due to a long history of extraction and consumption, a huge disc-like space has existed underground in Beijing for decades. The area is estimated to exceed 1,000 square kilometers.

The pollution is believed to be caused by rapid economic development, which releases large quantities of nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium and

other industrial pollutants into the water, according to a recent study by the China University of Geosciences in 2003.

The other pollutants include calcium and magnesium, which make turn water into "hard water."

"But I can assure you that the running water leaving our mills is clean," said Ren Xiaohun, senior technician from the Eighth Running Water Mill in Beijing.

Ren said that "hard water" is healthy and isn't unsafe. But he also said that the quality of the tap water in Beijing isn't guaranteed, and recommended people boil their tap water before drinking.

"Most of the pollution is produced after the water leaves our mill," Ren said. "The pipelines to every house, for instance, are old and possibly unclear."

He said consumers should drink bottled water or use tap purifiers if they prefer non-boiled water.

Hopefully, Beijing will use the water from the Yangtze River by 2014, thanks to a project that started a decade ago that will divert Yangtze River water.

The city also started encouraging the use of recycled water years ago and discouraging the waste of water by golf courses, ski centers and swimming pools.

"Beijing is a city with heavy pressure on its water supply," said Wang Zhanshen, environmental science and technology professor of Tsinghua University. "We must be aware of the need to conserve this resource."



CFP Photo

ASK Beijing Today

Email your questions to:
weiyang@ynet.com

I would like to know the estimated cost of starting a general consultancy company for Hong Kong in Beijing. I have contacted a few agents but the costs vary so much.

It depends on how quick you would like to have your company set up. The time influences the price. For example, if you have someone doing the complete job for you, you will get all documents within several working days, and the cost is around Hk \$10,000 (8,200 yuan), including one-year operation. On the other hand, if you try the normal way, it can take you three to four months to finish, but the cost will be much lower.

Try companysec.com/incorporate/default.asp.

I know KFC and McDonald's deliver, but what about Chinese restaurants? Is there a delivery fee or tip?

A number of Chinese restaurants have home delivery services, but many of them have a minimum order value and only deliver within a certain distance. Some will charge you a delivery fee while others won't, but you don't need to tip. Use dianping.com to find Chinese restaurants in your neighborhood, then call them and ask whether they can deliver food to your home and how much.

As an expat, do you think it would be hard to find a job as a personal trainer at a gym? I speak fluent English and am currently taking Mandarin classes. I am an internationally certified trainer.

I think it would be pretty easy for you to find such a job in Beijing as long as you have experience. There is great demand among foreigners who are looking for personal trainers in the big cities. Also, some hotels and private gyms would like to have experienced trainers on staff as well. So try your luck at places like Shangri-La at the Kerry Center.

(By Wei Xi)

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BEIJING TODAY Editor: Wei Ying Designer: Zhao Yan

'I came, I saw, I recorded'

Enriching life through travel

Tan Huaiyu, like a man always on the road – wearing casual clothes and toting a backpack and camera.

But he is not a typical tourist. Tan takes books on each tour and writes a travelogue using words, pictures, paintings and postcards to explore how his travels have deepened his understanding and appreciation of culture and life.

Born in 1965 in Beijing, Tan worked in a trade company after graduation. He quit many jobs and started traveling in 1999, when he was 34.

Many of his travel destinations have been UNESCO World Heritage sites.

Many heritage sites have experienced natural disasters and man-made calamities during the past few centuries. "Some are kept as ruins and others are restored. Each country has a different attitude toward protection of its relics," Tan said last Saturday during a lecture titled "Travel Without Borders at the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art."

Walking among the dilapidated walls and columns in the ruins of an ancient Roman city founded in the 4th century BC and located in Tunisia, Tan said he only saw an old shepherd driving sheep. "I was surprised that the ancient site had turned into a pasture over the years," he said.

Before each trip, he researches the history as much as possible.

Looking back at the 147 cultural heritage sites he has visited, Tan said that most of his favorites were mausoleums or temples.

Indonesia's Borobudur was one of them because of its twisted history. "The 8th-century shrine and a place for Buddhist pilgrims lay hidden for centuries under volcanic ash, eventually being reclaimed by the jungle," he said.

It was rediscovered only in the early 19th century, when he led a team to cut down the jungle to reveal the shrine. In the later 19th century, archaeologists began to restore the temple using chemicals to wash away the remaining volcanic ash.

"It is said that, at first, the chemicals brought back the shine of the carvings and sculptures. However, the restoration was halted when the villagers began to perish from chemical poisoning," he said. "The new chemicals, while less toxic, never restored the shine but gave the temple its now famous yellow tint."

Listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Borobudur has become a playground for nearby children who climb on its ancient stone walls.

That belief comes from his own experiences.

As a youth, he and his friend played at the Temple of Heaven and often put their ears up to the Echo Wall. Today's children can't do the same, because the stone wall built to protect the Echo Wall has destroyed to seal the site.

"It is a kind of sadness to see the wall, how will they know what it is? How can we express it? How can we protect it in the future?" he said.

"These heritage sites connect the past and the present, and that gives us pause and awe to marvel at the magnificent achievements of history," he said.

Listed as a World Heritage Site in 1999, the Duan Rock Carvings are famous for the religious sculptures and carvings made on the stone cliffs from the 9th to 10th centuries.

The Chongqing site is evidence of a brief harmony between Buddhism and Taoism and how they were fused. In the carving of the Hering Gate, he said, he told the story of cultivation according to a Buddhist doctrine in the 12th century.

In one of the scenes, the herdsman holds the reins while talking with another man and the cow stands beside them with its head tilted slightly to one side.

"After I saw this scene several times, I realize that apparently it is a tame cow, but according to Buddhism, it still has an insatiable desire, as it still looks at the other people's gossip," he said. "It reminds me of philosophy in marital relations. Can we reject the chance to sneak a look at our spouses' lives? Can we resist the temptation of gossip?"

Each year, he explores new adventures and a new voyage of discovery. He said he could not remember how many times he visited the Forbidden City, but that each visit brought new discoveries.

In March, he found an abandoned palace called Yanxi Palace. Its Chinese caption said that it was destroyed by a fire in 1845. "I'm sure it was burned, judging by its appearance. But after reading the English caption, I found that the building was destroyed by one built after the fire: it was an aquarium built in 1909 that was unfinished when the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) fell," he said.

Along the gate, he said, a stone plate of pavement carved with characters in front of Ningbo Gate. After noticing the strange marking in the sunlight, Tan sprinkled drinking water on the plate and found characters engraved on it.

"The water soon evaporated in the sun and I quickly took my picture. With the water gone, no other tourists noticed the secret," he said.

After he came back home, he realized the characters he had photographed recorded an event in Tang Dynasty (618-907) history.

Fascinated with his discovery, Tan began to think about how to record history in his own way.

Having collected stamps since he was seven years old, he decided to start designing postcards. After taking a photo, he attaches a related stamp and creates a postmark where the event happened.

At the 2010 Shanghai World Expo, he took pictures of each country's pavilion, affixed an official Expo stamp and a stamp from the corresponding country, and created a postmark for the pavilion.

"There are many ways to record history. I just choose what I am familiar with. It is meaningful, because it has not only documented history, but also become a unique document," he said.



An old shepherd drives sheep in Dougou, an ancient Roman city founded in the 6th century BC in Tunisia.



Tan Huaiyu discovers a stone plate in the pavement carved with characters at Ningbo Gate.

"There are many ways to record history. I just choose what I am familiar with. It is meaningful, because it has not only documented history, but also become a unique document."

Photos provided by Tan Huaiyu and UCCA



Tan Huaiyu (left) and a gladiator



Borobudur is the 8th-century shrine for Buddhist pilgrims in Indonesia.



The Duan rock carvings are famous for being a harmonious fusion of Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism.

By He Jianwei

Tan Huaiyu is a travel legend. He has toured more than 147 world cultural heritage sites in 31 countries and attended the 2005 Aichi World Expo, the 2008 Beijing Olympics and the 2010 Shanghai World Expo.

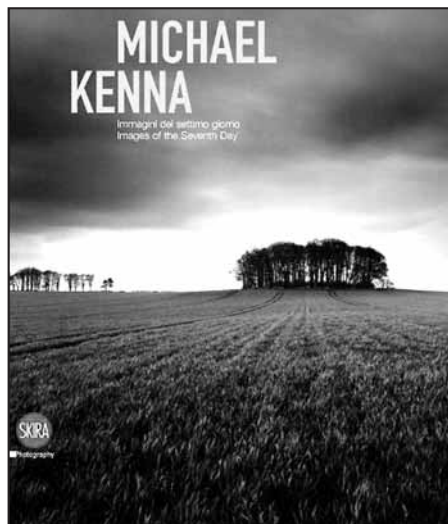
"My journey to world culture heritage sites is a way to witness the past, my attendance at the Olympic Games was a way to witness the present; my visit to the World Expo was one to foresee the future," Tan said.

Landscapes seen in black and white



Michael Kenna

Photo by Lu Xiao



Michael Kenna: Images of the Seventh Day, 1974-2009

By Michael Kenna and edited by Sandro Parmiggiani, 272pp, SKIRA, \$50

By Wei Xi

Last Sunday afternoon, Michael Kenna, together with his new photographic collection *Michael Kenna: Images of the Seventh Day, 1974-2009*, shared his understanding of photography and experiences in taking pictures.

Kenna, born in northern England in 1953, is considered the foremost landscape photographer of his generation. His work, which continues to be film-based, reflects a sense of refinement, introspection and timelessness.

The new book – the largest collection of Kenna's photos – traces his career as a photographer. It catalogs 290 black-and-white scenes captured by Kenna from the early 1970s to the late '00s. It includes Kenna's travels through the UK, US, France, Egypt and China.

Kenna said although he began shooting in his early 20s in North England, it was his formal study of the art in 2001 in Japan that had the greatest influence on him.

"Buddhism, especially Zen, influenced me and my work," Kenna said. Since then, his photographic compositions have been more clean and simple.

Kenna said color pictures contain too much detail and too much stimulation, while black-and-white images have a more vague and mysterious feeling.

"I do not want to duplicate things. I hope different people form their own interpretations about the same photo," he said.

Although Kenna had also taken photos of people, his real interest is in natural sceneries. He always shoots scenes that are open and calm, without too many distractions.

What natural objects are there, such as trees, are treated more as a friend than a subject – a technique Kenna said helps bring out their most natural appearance.

"(Shooting nature) is like the relationship with a friend. The more you spend time together, the closer you become," he said. "And the same things appear different at different times."

Kenna gestured to four pictures of trees, which he said were actually the same tree visited many times and from many angles.

Early in his career, Kenna tried many cameras and techniques to try and learn what equipment he should use and how he should shoot. Later on, he had an epiphany: "The type of camera makes no difference; it's the person behind the camera that matters," Kenna said.

In the early days, Kenna preferred to take pictures early in the morning, but gradually he began to shoot late at night. He found it was hard to control pictures taken in the evening because exposure times could range from five minutes to 10 hours. That's a lot of time for things to move.

Among his favorite night shots were a picture of running water and one of the rising of the moon.

Stepping out of a parent's shadow

By He Jianwei

As their first and most important teachers, parents shape a child's personality.

Therapist Susan Forward studies cases of parenting deficiencies that cripple children emotionally in her new book *Toxic Parents: Overcoming Their Hurtful Legacy and Reclaiming Your Life*.

She also guides parents to learn to stop manipulating their children – a tactic that leads many to perpetuate the frustrating relationship patterns learned at home for the rest of their lives.

It was first published on the mainland in 2003 and reprinted earlier this month.

"We have a strong tradition of moral consciousness and filial piety in our family – a respect for the parents. Parents are the absolute authority in the family and children are not allowed to be disobedient to their parents. That is the root of many psychological problems," said Wu Zhihong, a psychologist and psychological consultation teacher.

Wu says that many adults who are sensitive about their reputation were dishonored in their childhood. Chinese parents seldom praise and encourage their children: when the children make progress, they admonish them to stem off arrogance.

"When they grow up, they become very sensitive about respect," he said.

When children grow up under the pressure of a domineering parent, they end up having trouble relating to others they care about.

One of Wu's male patients dreamed that he killed a female classmate and lived in a constant state of anxiety. "I asked him who the classmate associated with and he told me it was his mother," Wu said. "In reality, he is a filial son and polite to women, but he was being crushed by her overbearing nature."

According to Swiss psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung's theory, everyone carries a shadow and the shadow is prone to projection, turning a personal inferiority into a perceived moral deficiency. "It will not disappear. When it appears, it is destructive," Wu said.

Li Lei, who killed six family members at his home in Daxing District in December 2009, was arrested for the murder of his parents, two sons, a wife and a sister. He told police he was annoyed by his family and that they psychologically pressured him by expecting too much.

"It is an important book for Chinese readers – both parents and children – who need to conduct serious self-examination. The book reads easily thanks to the author's simple language and vivid examples," Wu said.

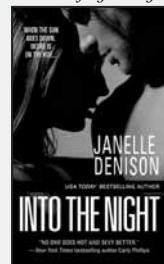


Toxic Parents: Overcoming Their Hurtful Legacy and Reclaiming Your Life

By Susan Forward and Craig Buck, 258pp, Liaoning Education Press, 29.8 yuan

CNPIEC Bookstore book listing

The China National Publication Import and Export Corporation's (CNPIEC) bookstore recommends these new arrivals to *Beijing Today* readers.



Into the Night

By Janelle Denison, 352pp, St. Martin's, 70 yuan

Nathan Fox is a former marine and Las Vegas vice cop. Heading up security for the Onyx Casino is tame compared to his past, but it is not his only job. Working for the Reliance Group is his real passion. His current mission is to find a missing woman, but he must deal with a stubborn and stunning journalist who has nosed her way into the investigation.



Art of Jaime Hernandez: The Secrets of Life and Death

By Todd Hignite, 275pp, Abrams Comic Arts, 275 yuan

In 1981, two Mexican-American brothers Gilbert and Jaime Hernandez self-published their first comic book, *Love and Rockets*, which changed American cartooning with its appealing characters and skilled storytelling. J. Hernandez's moving stories chronicle the lives of some of the most memorable and fully formed characters. His female protagonists, delineated with humor, candor and breathtaking realism, come to life within California's Mexican-American culture and punk milieu.



The Prints of John Piper: Quality and Experiment

By John Piper, 232pp, Lund Humphries Pub, 1,700 yuan

First published in 1987 and reissued in 1996 following Piper's death, the book has been updated for this new edition, incorporating a new essay by David Fraser Jenkins on Piper's experimental prints of the mid-1960s; a new introduction by Orde Levinson; an up-to-date bibliography and expanded lists of designs, exhibitions, illustrations and public collections; unseen archival photographs; and a completely updated page-design, as well as standard indexes of prints, portfolios, printers and publishers and incorrect titles.

(By He Jianwei)



A Hong Kong miniature artist



Hong Kong dim sum stores



The century-old Law Kee shoe shop



A British double-decker bus in front of the 100-year-old pawn shop



A preserved pork street vendor



Hong Kong hair salon

Chinese herbal medicine shop
Photos by Raista Lai

By Chu Meng

It may not be possible to pick up a whole shop and look around inside it, but with miniature art one can come amazingly close. These 1:12 artistic models of street scenes and house interiors do more than make the observer feel like a giant: they preserve history.

Hong Kong has an extraordinary group of miniature artists, and its members have spent the last several years recreating scenes of the old city that are being lost in the push for development. Their collected works were exhibited for the first time in Hong Kong last month, and since then the Web has caught miniature fever.

Small art immortalizes bygone era in 3D

A century-old shoe shop, street salon, squatter's shack, fishmonger and dim sum stand are classic images of Hong Kong being lost with modernization.

While the original buildings and scenes may be gone, their memory lives on in miniature, an art genre that recreates daily objects on a strict 1:12 scale.

The 42 miniatures exhibited last month at "Hong Kong Zoomed-In Miniature Exhibition" were created by a new group of Hong Kong miniature artists, members of the Hong Kong Miniature Art Society. Viewers were able to zoom in and pan around the miniatures to appreciate the creators' attention to detail.

In the Law Kee Shoe Shop, shelves of shoes were stacked on both sides of the door. The women's shoes were in diverse styles while the men's were shiny and smooth.

The shop's interior was made of green and white tiles. The middle had a stand for modeling shoes and showing off the cobbler's tools of the trade: leather scraps, nails, hammers and glue. A long ceiling lamp shed a faint yellow light. The second floor bedroom was divided from the ground floor and linked by narrow stairs.

"Everything is scaled down perfectly from the real Law Kee Shoe Shop. My only references were old movies and photos, since the shop was torn down 10 years ago," said Lee Louyau, the artist.

During the two-week exhibition, many old Hong Kongers visited and told stories about the lost buildings. One old woman pointed at a box hanging from the street lamp in front of the Law Kee Shoe Shop and told her it used to be a "rat box."

Hong Kong used to have a serious problem with rats, so the colonial government distributed boxes with poison to every family. People could hang the

boxes on the nearest street lamp after killing a rat, and the government would collect them for disposal.

Tony Lai, a 33 year-old "part-time" miniature artist who works as a model and sand table designer for a real estate developer, created the rooftop squatter shack in the exhibition. The piece took him three months to complete using his memory and his grandmother's black-and-white photos.

Lai grew up in one of the cheap rooms which were a symbol of Hong Kong's poorest. During the last two decades, they have been completely swept away from the island.

"I burst into tears several times while working on it. It made me recall childhood and my grandpa. He passed away in our rooftop room," Lai said.

But the difference between miniature art and his model building work are sharp. Miniature art places great emphasis on extreme detail and restoration based on real objects or real photos and videos. Model building focuses only on the exterior.

"Building models are mostly hollow shells. Miniature art depicts everything from its facade to its deepest interior in great detail. My roof room, with its worn-out dishes and leftovers in the sink, are all restored. People looking at it can even see what we had for dinner," he said.

Recent years have seen a big push to use miniature art as a means of historical preservation. Through miniature art, all historical artifacts can be completely preserved in three-dimensions for future viewing.

The choice of materials in miniature art is also quite flexible, and there is always



something that suits a creator's budget.

The form first became popular in the 18th century, when miniatures were purchased by the Imperial family of the Holy Roman Empire, today's Germany. Early miniature art did not pay much attention to the scale and materials – it was simply a three-dimensional representation of anything worth preserving.

It quickly spread to the Netherlands and Britain, and later crossed the ocean to the Americas and Japan.

Today, the German miniature art society has formed a series of standards for aspiring miniature artists. The most important is that all work must follow a strict 1:12 scale.

"An often-used definition is that a piece of miniature art is capable of being held in the

palm of the hand, or that it covers less than 100 square centimeters," said Rainsta Lai, curator of the exhibition.

She said Germany and the US have the largest miniature art scenes – the US White House and the Smithsonian American Art

Museum have extensive collections of miniature art. There is also an American Museum of the Miniature Arts in Texas.

"It's certain that British colonists contributed to the growth of this art form in Hong Kong more than one hundred years ago," she said.

Hong Kong's online community for miniature shows 48 works in disassembly, and how hundreds of parts come together to make each.

Included are the 150-year-old Cantonese-restaurant Tai Ping Koon, a street hawkers' cart, closely-built flats, classic barber's chairs and a mini-televisions that appear to be showing programs.

"As these collective memories of Hong Kong give way to other 'more valuable' developments, at least these miniature models will live on in less space," Lai said.



More shopping choices from designer sites



Necklace, 48 yuan



Vase, 128 yuan



Lamp, 85 yuan each

By Annie Wei

Instead of working up a sweat searching for original design or handicrafts around the city, try wowsai.com, which aims to become the Chinese version of etsy.com.

Etsy.com is a US company that's a platform for buying and selling thousands of handmade or vintage items.

Wowsai, created two years ago, claims to have products from 500 designers and 10,000 different original items. You can find things like jewelry, clothes, toys, photographs, cakes and design work, ranging from a few yuan to 10,000 yuan.

As the site only sells original pieces, each item has a limited quantity. Wowsai isn't a business-to-customer site but a customer-to-customer platform. Designers build their stores online and sell them to buyers directly.

Designers often write information about their items and what inspired the creation.

Anyone interested in selling their designs can visit the site and set up their own shops. At the moment, the site does not charge for launching a store, but takes 8 percent of each sale.

Website: wowsai.com



Ring, 299 yuan



Wood clock, 288 yuan



Lamp, 528 yuan

Photos provided by wowsai.com

Mirror, 480 yuan

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FOR COFFEE LOVERS

Eat to your stomach's delight, a la carte style

By Annie Wei

Buffets present the ultimate dilemma for diners: how much *must* they eat to get their money's worth? While all luxury hotels offer at least one buffet selection in their restaurants, it's usually overpriced.

The T-Bazaar at Traders Hotel offers an alternative: instead of 298 yuan for unlimited food, it lets customers pick and choose what dishes they actually want.

The restaurant tries to bring in international food bazaar choices at affordable prices.

Diners only pay for what is ordered from five counters – Fresh and Crunch, Noodle and Congee Island, Grilled Roasted and Fried, Soup Sense, and Asian Delight.

We recommend Soup Sense counter to start, where double boiled chicken soup with ginseng (28 yuan), pork rib herbal soup (28 yuan) and mushroom soup (28 yuan) are made of quality seasonal ingredients and fresh local produce.

At the Noodle and Congee Island counter, one can try various local noodles and dim sum. Before re-launching, the restaurant was known for its southeast Asian dishes. Signature dishes like Laksa (68 yuan) and Singapore prawn noodle (58 yuan) are still available. Both come in a big serving, made of imported ingredients and strong flavors.

More signature dishes are found at the Asian Delight counter, like Hainanese chicken rice (78 yuan), Bak Kut The (58 yuan), a Malay dish made of braised pork and bone in herbal soup, and Kari Ayam (48 yuan), a Malay-style chicken curry.

At the Grilled Roasted and Fried counter, we recommend Ikan Bakar (88 yuan), a Malay spiced fish fillet wrapped inside a banana leaf, and beef sirloin steak (198 yuan), which is thick, tender and juicy.

For light dishes like fried vegetables or salads, visit the Fresh and Crunch counter. We recommend traders chef salad (38 yuan), fresh tuna Nicoise salad (38 yuan) and savory blueberry cheese-cake (28 yuan).

For office workers in the Guomao area, T-Bazaar is a great destination for a healthy lunch.

T-Bazaar

Where: 1 Jiangguomen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District

Open: 6 am – 11 pm

Cost: 6505 2277 ext. 35



Laksa, 68 yuan

Hainanese chicken rice, 78 yuan



Bak Kut The, 58 yuan



Salad, 38 yuan

Photos provided by T-Bazaar

Modern Scandinavian food at Royal Smushi House



Royal Smushi House



Smushi, 28 yuan each



Photos provided by Royal Smushi House

By Wei Xi

Royal Smushi House is bringing Danish favorites to the city. The store in Beijing is only the second international franchise branch of Royal Cafe in Copenhagen, following the opening of the cafe in Tokyo last year.

The Beijing branch is a restaurant, bar and bakery rolled into one, providing guests the unique experience of Scandinavian cuisine and design.

For being "based on traditional Danish fare," the food at Royal Smushi House has a markedly international and innovative twist, said Johan Jorstad Gade, marketing manager of Royal Smushi House.

Smushi, similar to a Danish mini smorrebrod, is a reinvention of the traditional Danish open-face sandwich, with a sushi appearance. It is usually a small piece of sourdough rye bread topped with salmon, curry chicken salad, home-smoked mackerel and other delicious homemade toppings.

Smushi was originally created by Frederik Jensen, with

Rud Christiansen and Lo Ostergaard, the people behind The Royal Cafe concept. The Royal Cafe website calls the Smushi a "new culinary phenomenon." All together, there are 200 different types of Smushi, with 10 available at Beijing's Royal Smushi House. The menu will change with the seasons.

Smushi costs 28 yuan each, while the set meal includes three choices of Smushi, cold soup and a cup of coffee or tea for 90 yuan.

The downstairs cafe serves Smushi and a variety of cakes for lunch and afternoon tea, while the upstairs restaurant serves modern Danish food for dinner.

Gade recommended the slow braised and crispy skin pork belly (150 yuan), a traditional Danish dish often eaten on Christmas, served with mashed potato foam, small carrots, peas and red cabbage coleslaw.

Gade also suggested the mussels and hay (150 yuan), made from white wine steamed blue mussels with parsley and shallots. It's a Danish version of the French Moules Marinières, but

with burnt hay in the stock to give the smoked flavor of many traditional Danish dishes.

Nordic Morning (50 yuan) is also a recommended Danish dessert, made of yogurt, sorbet, fruit, granola, elderflower and apple foam.

Royal Smushi House also provides a wide range of wines, champagnes, beers, soft drinks and coffees.

As the only Danish restaurant in Beijing, Royal Smushi House is designed in a cozy Scandinavian style and has terrace seating.

Royal Smushi House

Where: 12 Dongzhimen Da Jie, Chaoyang District

Open: 11 am – 11 pm during soft opening (grand opening to be determined)

Tel: 6416 9664

Cost: Set Smushi menu at the cafe is around 90 yuan. You can also get cakes and coffee for around 80 yuan or spoil yourself to an afternoon tea set with cakes, coffee or tea and a glass of champagne for 180 yuan. Restaurant dining averages about 200 yuan per person.

Paradox between belief and material society

By He Jianwei

South of Shigatse, the second largest city in Tibet, is Sakya Monastery, home to a rich collection of Tibetan relics. Artist Zhang Xiaotao's latest work, completed after four years of repeated visits to Tibet, is named after this holy structure.

Sakya is a visual art project that began in 2007 when Zhang was working on an animated film, *Night*, about Tibetan Buddhism. He visited Tibet for a month to investigate the Sakya Monastery and shot a large amount of footage.

In late 2007, when he returned to Beijing, he worked with archaeologists from Peking University and developed the concept for this project by collecting materials, writing a script after reading and discussing Tibetology, archaeology and Buddhism.

Three years later, he brought a team to Tibet to film the *Sakya* documentary and another team to begin production of the animated film about the monastery.

His original idea was to blend animation with documentary, but he found that it was difficult to utilize the languages of animation and documentary in



the same work.

So he decided to make two films in the end – the animated film is about the virtual world and the documentary depicts the real world.

Zhang is obsessed with ancient Chinese art, such as stone carving, woodcarving and ceramics, much of which is related to Buddhism. During his childhood, he repeatedly visited a temple from the Tang Dynasty (618-907) in his hometown of Chongqing, which has beautiful stone carvings.

From 1993 to 2010, he made seven trips to areas around western Sichuan, southern Gansu and Tibet, where he was attracted to

the Buddhist atmosphere.

When he stayed at Guoqing Temple on Mount Tiantai in Sichuan Province for 10 days in 2009, he chatted with the abbot, wrote calligraphy, read and painted every day. Living the tranquil life, he found the link between belief and the material world.

"Today's China is too fast, too crazy. Slowness is a luxury," Zhang said. "I want to explore the issue of the secularization of religion, and the paradox between

faith and material society in the work of Sakya."

The exhibition will open this Saturday afternoon at the White Box Museum of Art.

Sakya – Zhang Xiaotao Solo Exhibition

Where: White Box Museum of Art, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until October 10, daily except Monday, 10 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free
Tel: 5978 4801

Saturday, August 20

Exhibition
Spring Chill
Contemporary Art Exhibition

This group exhibition presents works by artists born after 1980, part of what older generations call the "happy generation," but their works are gray, yellow and cold in tone.

Where: LDX Contemporary Art Center, Songzhuang Art Creation, Tongzhou District

When: Until September 11, daily except Monday and Tuesday, 10 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free
Tel: 6959 7109

Movie

The Gleaners and I (2000)

This film captures the life of field and urban gleaners. The film also features artists who incorporate recycled materials into their work.

Where: French Cultural Center, 1/F, Guangcai International Mansion, 18 Gongti

Xi Lu, Chaoyang District
When: 7 pm
Admission: 20 yuan, 10 yuan for students
Tel: 6553 2627

Nightlife

Dolan

This local band features traditional Mongolian folk music like khoomei and long tune.

Where: Jianghu Bar, 7 Dongmianhua Hutong, Jiadaokou Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District
When: 9 pm
Admission: 30 yuan
Tel: 6401 4611



Friday, August 19

Exhibition
Zhang Liguao Solo Exhibition
– Paintings
Since 2000

After graduating from the Art School of Tsinghua University in 2000, Zhang's paintings have focused on his memories of childhood, such as mountains and rivers that recur in his works.

Where: CU Space, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until September 2, daily except Monday, 10 am – 6:30 pm

Admission: Free
Tel: 5978 9576

Movie

The Full Monty (1997)

This British comedy tells the story of six unemployed workers who decide to form a male striptease troupe to make a living.

Where: China Film Archive, 3 Wenhuiyuan Lu, Xiaoxitian,

Haidian District

When: 7 pm
Admission: 20 yuan
Tel: 8229 6153

Nightlife

Longjin Band

Founded in 2007, this local band blends reggae with folk and punk.

Where: Weibozhiyan Club, Room 2308, 3/F North Building, SOHO Shangdu, 8 Dongdaqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 9:30 pm
Admission: 50 yuan, 40 yuan for students
Tel: 5900 0969



Sunday, August 21

Exhibition
In the Time of Peace and Harmony – Works by Tong Chong

Tong presents creations from the past two years to show his perceptions about the busy lifestyle of Macao and the colors of the cityscape.

Where: AFA Beijing Contemporary Art Center, 318 Art District, Hegezhuang Village, Cuigezhuang County, Chao-

yang District
When: 11 am – 6 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 6432 1562

Nightlife

Charity Performance for Blind Children

Seven bands perform a charity show for orphans who are blind or visually impaired.

Where: Mao Livehouse, 111 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 8:30 pm
Admission: 50 yuan

Tel: 6402 5080

Movie

Yulu (2011)

Director Jia Zhangke invites six young directors to make a film about 12 outstanding people from the fields of business and culture in the mainland, discussing difficulties they have confronted and their courage in overcoming the barriers.

Where: Broadway Cinematheque, 2/F Building 4, north section of Museum of Modern

Art (MOMA), 1 Xiangheyuan Lu, Dongcheng District
When: 7 pm
Admission: 40 yuan
Tel: 8438 8258 ext. 8008



Upcoming

Nightlife

The Shapers

Founded in 2008, this French punk rock band consists of vocalist and guitarist Anthony, bassist Nicolas and drummer Remi.

Where: Mao Livehouse, 111 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: August 25, 8:30 pm
Admission: 40 yuan advance purchase, 50 yuan at the door
Tel: 6402 5080

Stage in September

Concert

Ivo Janssen Piano Recital

Where: Forbidden City Concert Hall (inside Zhongshan Park), 18 Zhaodengyu Lu, Xicheng District

When: September 5, 7:30 pm
Admission: 30-380 yuan
Tel: 6417 7845

Peter Serkin Piano Recital

Where: Concert Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: September 6, 7:30 pm
Admission: 80-480 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

Michael Kaeshammer Jazz Piano Concert

Where: Beijing Concert Hall, 1 Bei Xinhua Jie, Xicheng District
When: September 15, 7:30 pm
Admission: 80-880 yuan
Tel: 5166 1145

Dance

Vancouver Goh Ballet

Youth Company China Tour

Where: Peking University Hall, 5 Yiheyuan Lu, Haidian District
When: September 10, 7:30 pm
Admission: 120-200 yuan
Tel: 6275 8452

La Sylphide by Guangzhou Ballet

Where: Opera House of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District
When: September 15-16, 7:30 pm
Admission: 80-400 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

Drama

Five Acts of Life

Where: PLA Theater, 60 Deshengmen Nei Dajie (southeast corner of Jishuitan Qiao), Xicheng District

When: September 14-18, 7:30 pm
Admission: 60-580 yuan
Tel: 6406 8888

Wangfujing

Where: Theater Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: September 28-30, 7:30 pm
Admission: 180-580 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

Opera

Donizetti's Opera: L'elisir d'Amore

Where: Opera House of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: September 10-13, 7:30 pm
Admission: 100-580 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

(By He Jianwei)

Don't let heat hold up your appetite

By Li Zhixin

It may technically be autumn in Beijing, but the summer heat isn't going anywhere yet.

The hot and stuffy air can have a profound effect on people's moods and appetites, even putting some in danger of malnutrition.

Upsetting of appetite loss

Emily Faller, a 36-year-old business consultant, went from 54 to 45 kilograms over the course of the summer. Her unusually thin frame makes her look withered and weak.

But Faller was not on an extreme diet: she says the hot weather left her with no appetite.

"I don't mind spending time in the kitchen, but food doesn't appeal to me when it is hot and muggy. If we have a string of cool days, my appetite snaps back, but I can't always count on getting such breaks," she said.

She usually eats breakfast, but skips lunch and eats only a light salad for dinner.

"I used to get rumbles after work or workout, but this summer I don't feel like eating more than that. Should I force myself to eat even though I'm not hungry? I know it's bad to only get like 700 calories a day," she said.

While her friends may envy her weight loss, it is anything but healthy.

"Diets make you look good in your clothes, but it is exercise that makes you look good naked," said Li Yan, a doctor at Guoyitang Hospital.

Decreased appetite can result in nutritional deficiencies that leave one's body weakened and ill equipped to combat illness.

"Most often people either don't want to eat or drink. Most people have brief periods where they lose their appetite for various reasons. However, when the problem persists, it can be a warning sign of a serious underlying illness," she said.

In most cases, loss of appetite is caused by emotional stress, medication, stomach infection, nausea, excessive smoking or drinking, or oral infection.



Photo by livingcenter.com

Herbal treatments

Loss of appetite should be combated as quickly as possible. If left untreated, one can end up with a compromised immune system.

There are many safe and natural ways to stimulate the appetite.

1. Bitter melon

This vegetable has potent compounds including charantin and lectins that sharpen the appetite and aid digestion. Try to eat some every day.

2. Black gram

Boil 250 grams of black gram in about 600 milliliters of water and strain the infusion after cooling. Drink it several times a day to treat appetite loss.

3. Coriander

This herb has proved to be valuable in boosting appetite. Juice and drink 50 milligrams of freshly chopped coriander every day to help restore your appetite.

4. Garlic and ginger

Garlic and ginger possess a special property to stimulate the

digestive tone of the system and improve appetite. A soup with garlic and ginger can be of immense help to a patient suffering from poor appetite.

5. Astragalus

The herb includes potent flavonoids which strengthen your digestive system and help stimulate your appetite. Eat a 500-milligram astragalus herbal capsule twice daily with food.

6. Slippery elm bark

Slippery elm includes potent polysaccharides that aid in digestion and stimulate the appetite. Eat two 500-milligram tablets once daily with food.

7. Dandelion

This flower includes inulin, which acts as a mild laxative while promoting increased digestion and appetite. Eat a 750-milligram dandelion tablet twice daily with food.

8. Yarrow flower

The internal use of this powerful herb treats all digestive ailments

and provides sufferers with energy to encourage appetite. Eat two 325-milligram yarrow flower tablets three times daily with food.

9. Caraway seeds

These are a valuable tool when trying to restore one's appetite. Grind roasted caraway seeds and add a pinch of salt. Eat half a teaspoon of this powder after each meal to improve your appetite.

10. Alfalfa

Consuming alfalfa can provide necessary vitamins and minerals to your body. Try drinking fresh alfalfa juice before each meal.

11. Herbal teas

Loss of appetite can be cured effectively using herbal or green teas. Having a cup of chamomile tea, one of the best green teas, can boost your appetite. The infusion can be prepared by blending equal quantities of cardamom, cinnamon, coriander and fennel seeds together in about two cups of water. Filter and drink the solution.

Fruit remedies

The following fruits have also been shown to improve appetite.

1. Oranges

Oranges are an extremely useful remedy for appetite loss. Eat them with pepper and ginger powder three times a day. An orange before each meal can help restore one's appetite.

2. Lemon

Lemons and limes have also been effective at restoring appetite. Try eating a piece of lemon with a fresh piece of ginger once a day.

3. Sour grapes

Sour grapes and raisins are another good home remedy for appetite loss. Eat them with a pinch of

salt and pepper to restore appetite. This remedy is especially effective for appetite loss that follows a fever.

3. Guava

Eat two to three guavas two hours before each meal.

4. Tamarind

Soak 10 grams of tamarind and add a little of salt

and pepper for taste. Consume the infusion once a day as part of a treatment for loss of appetite.

5. Mango

Roast a medium-sized mango over a flame for five minutes and squeeze out all the sap. Blend this with water, cumin seeds and a bit of salt.

Preventing appetite loss

1. Avoid cooking strong-smelling foods such as fish or cauliflower.
2. Eat several small meals each day instead of three large ones.
3. Exercise regularly.
4. Consider the use of a feeding tube.

Boarding with a local family in Xicheng



By Zhang Dongya

In 2008, a program called "Olympic Family" paired foreign tourists with locals who provided them room and board, essentially acting as a hotel.

Three years later, the program has expanded. Starting this month, 11 courtyard hotels, hostels and folk houses in hutong in Xicheng District will act as certified "Beijing's Home" units, providing travelers with a truly authentic home experience.

Photo provided by Far East Group



Backpackers from all over the world head for courtyard hostels to experience authentic Beijing life.

Photo provided by Far East Group

Old courtyard hostel

Far East International Youth Hostel is located in a narrow hutong called Tieshu Xiejie, meaning "Iron Tree Side Street." But its hard-to-find location hasn't stopped foreign backpackers from coming from

around the world.

Founded in 2001 by Far East Restaurant, it joined the International Youth Hostel Federation (IYHF) in its first year and is now one of the oldest hostels in Beijing. It has received more than 500,000 tourists from 60 countries, according to sales department manager Li Qiang.

Inside are more than 100 rooms for four, six or eight people. There is also a kitchen and laundry service.

The basement walls have been colorfully decorated by travelers from different countries.

Nearby is a unique courtyard with 16 rooms that can accommodate 68 people. Vines grow around the yard, where foreign guests are often seen enjoying the shaded and cool air. The hostel manager said they hold grape-picking activities when the grapes are ripe.

Hostel beds range from 40 to 60 yuan. The manager said that in recent years, more domestic travelers have been lodging in the hostel as well.

Among foreigners, most are from the US, UK and France. Hong Kong only ranks 10th on the list.

The hostel is planning renovations this year. It will upgrade the courtyard and give its rooms different colors. More public spaces will be added for events and activities. The renovations are expected to finish next spring.

Far East International Youth Hostel

Where: 90 Tieshu Xiejie, Xicheng District

Tel: 5195 8811

Note: Those who want to experience the courtyard before it gets renovated should make bookings soon.



Far East International Youth Hostel's basement walls have been colorfully decorated by travelers from different countries.

Find inner peace in hutong hostel

Xisi is famous for its eight hutong in the north, called Xisi Bei Batiao (Northern Eight Strips). The seventh of those hutong is where Beijing Lotus Hostel, a secluded youth hostel founded in 2006, is located.

It is a traditional three-courtyard building that can be traced back to the late Qing Dynasty. The major hall, which faces south, is the only preserved building in the yard, with renovated side halls and wing rooms.

There are about 50 rooms that can accommodate about 100 people. Each bed is 60 yuan. All rooms come equipped with basic facilities.

The old hall has kept a traditional layout and furniture. During peak travel time, guests can stay here; during other times of the year, it's where the owner of the courtyard lives. The cost for the two-person room is 400 yuan.

Renovations began in April and will finish around October. Bigger rooms with private toilets are being built. Standard rooms with private bathrooms will cost about 260 yuan per night.

The hostel serves sandwiches and beverages. It has expanded its offerings after it gets added on the list of Beijing's Home hostels.

Beijing Lotus Hostel

Where: 29 Xisi Bei Qitiao, Xicheng District

Tel: 6612 8341

Note: Not a member of the International Youth Hotel Federation; visitors should book from lotushostel.cn or by calling 6612 8341.

Continued on page 21...



Beijing Lotus Hostel is located in a traditional three-courtyard building.

Photo by Mockingbird



Photo by Mockingbird



A Peking Opera singer performs at a courtyard hostel.

...continued from page 20

High-end courtyard hotel

Xinghua Courtyard Hotel, located at 42 Xinghua Hutong, was once part of the mansion of Sonin, a former senior regent during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911).

Located near Deshengmen (Gate of Virtuous Triumph), visitors are close to many central tourist sites, including Beihai Park, the Forbidden City and Tian'anmen Square.

The hotel targets high-end consumers with its eight five-star grand suites and two standard suites. All have a TV with international channels, a mini bar, safe, bathroom and free Internet. Twenty-four-hour housekeeping services are available.

Styled after Ming (1368-1644) and Qing-era architecture, visitors in both the top suite (6,000 yuan per night) and standard rooms (980 yuan per night) are provided with traditional sandalwood furniture along with modern fixings.

The top suite, which has a "sunshine bathroom," perfectly combines traditional and contemporary styles.

The ancient hotel has a censer table made from rare silkwood. In the basement is a small exhibition displaying antiques unearthed from the old yard, including ancient tiles and porcelain. The floor of the multi-functional hall

is paved with ancient ceramic tiles.

There are also meeting facilities that can fit 50 people – also perfect for small-sized wedding banquets.

Customers can also use the room to organize Peking Opera performances. It costs 30,000 to rent the courtyard for an entire day.

The special dishes served by the Shichahai Business Center are a combination of Cantonese and Hunan food.

Other services include tours to major places of interest, including the Great Wall, and a Shichahai Hutong and boat tour.

Xinghua Courtyard Hotel

Where: 42 Xinghua Hutong, Xicheng District
Tel: 8322 0266

Note: Reservations should be placed a month in advance



This old yard was once part of the mansion of Sonin, a former senior regent during the Qing Dynasty.



Traditional sandalwood furnitures.



Shadow wall with refined carving



Photo by Mockingbird

"Beijing's Home" tourism

During the Olympics, tourists from around the world stayed at hutong and courtyard hostels under the program "Olympic Family," designed to give visitors an authentic Beijing experience.

The program has been extended for visitors in the here and now. In addition to Xicheng District sites, 10 hotels and hostels in Dongcheng District have also been designated as "Beijing's Home" sites.

Event

Cable 8 business incubator for young artists

Cable 8, along with Beijing Youth League, has opened a creative business incubator in Chaoyang District for young artists. The Chinese capital has seven cultural innovation parks, including those scattered in Shijingshan, Daxing, Pinggu, Tongzhou and Changping districts.

Cable 8 Park was established in 2007 and is an example of cultural infusion in the CBD areas.

Where: Beijing Wire and Cable Plant, 8 Langjiayuan, Chaoyang District
Tel: 6581 3456, 6595 3333
Email: loft100@163.com
Website: cable8.com



Apple Wine Festival from August 12 to 21



Frankfurt's apple wine culture has been important to the city's social life for hundreds of years. From August 12 to 21, locals and visitors will once again meet in the metropolis to celebrate Frankfurt's most popular beverage.

The Apple Wine Festival is traditionally accompanied by an entertaining stage program. Frankfurt folklore and poetry readings in the dialect provide old-time amusement for both the young and young at heart, and nearby Hessian cult bands get their audiences singing and dancing in the streets. Relaxed lounge music is also available, creating the perfect background for enjoying an unconventional apple wine cocktail.

Many apple wines are available for tasting at the festival's numer-

ous trendy booths and traditional stalls. Typical apple wine made from time-honored apple varieties are available, as are trendy mixed blends and popular apple wine cocktails. Festival visitors will also find an excellent selection of apple wine merchandise on sale at the Rossmarkt.

Those interested in taking back traditional apple wine "utensils" will find everything they need – from the typical ribbed apple wine glasses and glass covers, and the famous bembel, a blue-gray earthenware jug from which apple wine is traditionally served.

Where: Rossmarkt, Frankfurt, Germany

When: 11 am – 11 pm from Monday to Thursday, 11 am – midnight on Friday and Saturday

Dining

Sample Guizhou goods

Guizhou food is characterized by intense flavor, brilliant colors and a vibrant diversity of dishes. Come to Summer Palace this month, when guest chef Jiang will be serving up sour and spicy signature dishes such as boiled sliced fish in sour broth and marinated sausage with Guizhou flavor. Chef Jiang's amazing and entertaining culinary skills have earned him much recognition.

Where: China World Hotel, 1 Jianguomen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District
When: Now through August 21
Tel: 6505 2266 ext. 34



Happy Hour half off

Escape everyday life and hang out in the groovy environment of Zeta Bar. All drinks are half off from 6-9 pm. Disc jockeys will spin tunes to set the mood every Friday and Saturday.

Where: Hilton Beijing, 1 Dongfang Lu, Dongsanhuan Bei Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Monday – Saturday

Cost: Drinks half off from 6-9 pm, no cover charge

Tel: For reservations and "Z" membership call 5865 5050 or 5865 5125

Rent

Upper East Side apartment available for rent

This apartment is being made available for rent for the first time. It has a location with an excellent view and gets fresh air and sunshine every morning. All furniture is new.

Contact: Peter

Tel: 138 1175 7315

Email: luckycareer@yahoo.com

Monthly rent: 15,000 – 20,000 yuan

Sunlitun, int'l wonderland

This one-bedroom, 102-square-meter apartment is fully furnished and beautifully decorated. It has top-end electrical appliances and offers a great view. Neighborhood traffic is light, and it is a three-minute walk to Sunlitun bar street and the subway. Rent is 7,300 yuan per month.

Inquiries about similar apartments are welcome. There are many available for rent.

Tel: 182 1028 5922

Email: grant1029@126.com

Airline



SIA to order eight more Boeing 777s

Singapore Airlines has placed an order for eight more Boeing 777-300ERs to support its growth in the years ahead.

The new aircraft are scheduled for delivery during the 2013 financial year. They will be used by Singapore Airlines on its medium- and long-haul routes.

Powered by General Electric GE90 engines, the aircraft will join SIA's 19 Boeing 777-300ERs already in service. The planes will be outfitted in a three-class layout with the airline's latest cabin products and services.

"These additional B777-300ERs will help support our ongoing program to further strengthen the Singapore Airlines network, providing more travel options to our customers," said SIA CEO Goh Choon Phong.

"The order is in line with our longstanding policy of operating a young and modern fleet. This enables us to offer our latest cabin products, which have proven extremely popular with our customers."

(By Jackie Zhang)

Chinglish story

This column focuses on Chinglish mistakes in our daily life. If you have any experiences to share, send them to Li Zhixin at lizhixin@ynet.com.

Out to lunch



By Yao Weijie

In the Chinese zodiac, the rabbit symbolizes endurance, beauty, peace and hope – and is the animal of 2011. That's why people like buying things with rabbit patterns or insignias on them.

Gao Han, a friend, is a designer at a foreign advertisement company. He has been working at the company for about four years and has produced nothing but excellent designs. Recently, however, his boss wanted to downsize, so Gao began to worry that he might be laid off. He worked even harder.

Last month, his boss Sam asked him to design a logo with a rabbit.

"You know our company's condition. If you can't design a cute rabbit, you can leave," Sam said.

Gao was very nervous.

A month later, he completed the rabbit. He took the image to Sam and

waited for his boss' response.

Sam stared at it a long time before laughing and saying, "This rabbit is out to lunch, you can go."

Gao was confused, but since his boss has a bad temper, he didn't dare say anything. After a while, Sam's wife, Lily, swung by. Gao couldn't help asking her about this. "Why did he say my rabbit was out to lunch?"

"Sam is the one out to lunch," Lily said. "I like this design."

Gao was even more puzzled.

Eventually, he worked up the nerve to approach his boss. "Are you out to lunch now?"

"Why? It's just 10 o'clock, why would I have a lunch?" Sam said. "I asked Lily why you said my rabbit is out to lunch just now. She said you are out to lunch, so now I'm confused."

Sam laughed. "You misunderstood. Actually, 'out to lunch' means not completely there, so, crazy or mad. Lily said I was out to lunch because she really likes your design."

"But she probably misunderstood me. I was saying this rabbit of yours is crazy good."

"So ... you won't fire me?" Gao asked. "Not at the moment."

Blacklist

This is a column of words or phrases commonly misused by Chinese speakers. If you're planning to be an English teacher, reporter or employee of a multinational company, then watch out for this page each week

1. What prints are made tend to end up in the hands of careless collectors.

Professor Zhu Shida (ZSD): We have a noun clause here "What prints are made." I recently had a heated discussion with one of my friends about the nature of such noun clauses. I argued that the noun clause with "what" invariably assumes a singular form. It cannot and should not be regarded as a plural. My friend disagrees. After a further study of the question, I was convinced that he was right. Such noun clauses may be regarded as a singular or plural. Both are right. For example, Who will be chosen to go remains (or remain) unknown yet. So, the sample is right in its own way: What prints are made tend (or tends) to end up in the hands of careless collectors.

Terry-Boyd Zhang (TBZ): However, I agree with Professor Zhu's original idea. For example: Who will be chosen – as Miss World International – remains singular because there can only be one lovely lady crowned. Whereas if you want to put it in the plural, you need to make the agreement: Those who will be chosen as the 10 finalists of China's Got Talent remain a mystery. (Those ... remain a mystery – is the basic sentence.) It seems a bit awkward to me, so I would use the singular form in most cases.

2. They chose to tighten their belts and stay thrift.

ZSD: There is something wrong with the phrase "stay thrift." We used to have the combination of "stay + adjective," for instance, The defendants stayed silent when they were being accused of the crimes they had committed. The shipwreck stayed broken on the rock in the sea for months. Now, let us check the function of the word "thrift." It is a noun. It is never an adjective. It should be "stay thrifty." So, the combination of "stay + thrift" does not stand. It should be: They chose to tighten their belts and stay thrifty.

TBZ: In this case, in fact, there is a better word altogether. How about: They chose to tighten their belts and live frugally? In my mind, "thrift" has the idea of being "clever and resourceful in tough times" but "frugal" has more of a feeling of becoming a lifestyle ("staying"). However, "thrifty," used as an adjective, is fine too.

3. Iaido has gained known in Beijing.

ZSD: This example has a similar grammatical nature with the previous one. We talked about the combination of "verb + adjective." Such verbs are limited. They may include stay, remain, become, return, etc. It is not that all verbs can assume an adjective in a combination. Unfortunately, the verb "to gain" is one of these. I never see such a combination. I don't think it is right to say so. We used to say: Streaking right behind the pacesetter's neck, he was gradually gaining ground in the home stretch of the race. The car gained speed while it raced down the hill. So, we may say, Iaido has gained popularity in Beijing. But it is never "gained known."

TBZ: We could also say: Beijingers gained knowledge about Iaido at the seminar given at the SportAccord Combat Games. We can say this a bit differently too: Iaido gained an international following.

Chinglish on the way

This column aims to identify Chinglish in public areas. If you see any Chinglish signs, please send a picture of it to lizhixin@ynet.com together with your name and address.

Difficult to find the police

By Terry-Boyd Zhang

In my hometown, we find the police at the doughnut shop – this isn't the beginning of an old joke you've heard before. There used to be two police vehicles. We would breeze through town, count cars – one at the stoplight, one at Tim Horton's – then cruise off into the darkness, anticipating all sorts of wild and crazy things that teenagers with cars do. Surprisingly, most of us lived to tell about it.

In China, it is not very difficult to find the police. Beijing, for one, is a safe city, with police busily monitoring traffic and public safety on almost every corner. Sure, bad stuff still happens – a car accident here, a fire or a murder there – but it is promptly and efficiently dealt with. You would hardly



know the thing even happened.

If you do have (you, the first character in the problematic line) trouble or difficulty (kunnan, the second and third characters) finding (zhao, the first character after the space) the police (jingcha,

the last two characters) in Beijing, you could always try another city, such as Chengdu, Dalian, Guangzhou, Shanghai or Wenzhou. You could also try a more remote place, such as Guizhou, Tibet or Xinjiang. If you still have difficulty finding the police, I would think you are not trying hard enough. However, you should be able to find some soldiers, a special task force, a security guard or, at least, a grandma with a red arm band.

If, after all of your adventures around this great country, you truly still find it troublesome to find the police, I would suggest you fly to London. I hear they may have some police there but, unless your difficulty is extremely urgent, I believe they are currently busy with other matters.



“ Does modernization have to mean the end of tradition? ”



By Yao Weijie

The yearly dragon boat race is a major event for the villagers of Lianxi Village, a hamlet located on an island off the coast of Guangzhou.

Of course, hamlet is hardly an appropriate description for what has become a small city and folk culture resort – a change that forced the former villagers to resettle.

Each year, the villagers reunite at the site to carry on their tradition of dragon boat racing.

Modernization can't smash this village's spirit



For the villagers of Lianxi, Guangdong Province, the Dragon Boat Race is a way to test and maintain their unity.

Photos provided by Cao Dan

“The film explores how folk customs have survived to be handed down from agricultural society, and the meanings of their existence.”

Dragon Boat records the story of Lianxi Village, beginning with the dragon boat burial that followed the 2001 Dragon Boat Festival.

Cao Dan, the director, was born in neighboring Guangzhou in 1972 and graduated from the Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts in 1992. She immigrated to France in 1998 and studied Anthropological Filmmaking at the Paris Higher Education Experiment Collage.

“My parents had a house on the island that was a 10-minute walk from Lianxi Village, so I often played there. One day, I saw the villagers hiding their boat. I recorded the scene as a project for my anthropological film course,” Cao said.

“I was considering it as an anthropology project and planned to record everything related to the boats each time I came home. The government's plan to turn Lianxi Village into ‘University Town’ was not announced until this year: that's when I realized we needed to do something to record their lives,” she said.

But long before University Town, Lianxi was being torn apart by urbanization. The villagers were relocated in 2003, and while their living standards improved many traditions came to an abrupt end.

Still, Lianxi fared better than many of its neighbors: its ancestral hall and village center were preserved, and the village was reformed as a cultural tourism spot. The ancestral hall, however, remained the property of the villagers, who used it as a warehouse to store their dragon boats.

“In a way, that ancestral hall contains the spirit of the village. It comes alive again each year for the Dragon Boat Festival,” Cao said.

For the villagers, the yearly Dragon Boat Race is a way to test and maintain their unity.

The Dragon Boat Festival pays tribute to the ancient poet Qu Yuan, who drowned himself in 278 BC after the collapse of his country.

“The film explores how folk customs have survived to be handed down from agricultural society, and the meanings of their existence,” Cao said.

“Although the Pearl River Delta has long been open to the outside world, its old customs are surprisingly well preserved – especially the practices of racing dragon boats and maintaining an ancestral hall,” she said.

The purity of the minds of many of the former villages moved her the most, she said. Although the villagers were not well educated, their understanding of life and their dragon boats was touching. They also spoke Guangzhou's local dialect, which Cao worries may soon vanish like many elements of folk culture.

“The hardest part of shooting this movie was figuring out what kind of relationship to establish with the subjects, and how to convey that through careful editing of 10 years' worth of film,” said Cao, who handled both tasks alone.

If the movie has a message, it's that folk culture belongs to the people. It is an abstract concept, not something to preserve in a Disneyland-like folk village, Cao said.

The dragon boats are not a source of nostalgia: they are a way for the villagers to retain their dignity, and an invisible bond between one another.

